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The Spy Who Loved Me

By Judy Chavez with Rudy Maxa

The hotel suite was cluttered with empty bottles and overflowing ashtrays. It smelled stale. The living room's centerpiece was a cart of picked-over room-service food. The red carpet was faded, the curtains closed.

I soon learned the curtains were always closed in room 520 of what was then called the Sheraton Park Hotel, now the Sheraton Washington. I also learned that the male "secretary" who greeted me at the door was an FBI agent. And my client was not a French diplomat named André Ringland, as I'd been told, but a Soviet defector named Arkady Shevchenko, hidden away here while the CIA debriefed him.

On that May night seven years ago, I began regularly sleeping for money with the man I called Andy. Today Arkady Shevchenko's book, *Breaking with Moscow*, is a best seller, and Hollywood has paid \$450,000 to buy the rights to his story of spying for the United States before defecting from his United Nations job.

I saw Andy on *60 Minutes* not long ago, and he dismissed our sexual interlude as a two-week aberration. I hope his memory for other events—particularly those detailed in his memoir—was better; I was at his beck and call for seven

months. And in the end I had almost as much difficulty breaking with Andy as he had breaking with Moscow.

May 2, 1978. My beeper went off as I was drinking at the bar of Anna Maria's Italian Restaurant on Connecticut Avenue. I called my escort service. In the Yellow Pages, my employer advertised under two names: Foxy Lady and—appropriately, as it turned out—Mata Hari Escort Service. I was wanted for an all-night job at the Sheraton Park Hotel, room 520. I'd already seen two men that evening, and I hated all-night assignments; I could never fall asleep lying next to a stranger.

From the moment I arrived in the hotel's parking lot, I felt I was being watched. Paranoia comes with the territory when you're a prostitute, but there was something different about this job.

The escort service said the client, supposedly a French diplomat, had hired two girls previously, and they'd reported no difficulty. One of the women was there at the bar with me, and she confirmed what I'd learned on the phone. But she didn't tell me about the male secretary at the diplomat's door.

"Are you the girl we're waiting for?" he asked.

"Are you a cop?" I answered.

He told me he was Mr. Ringland's

secretary and that Mr. Ringland was very distressed this particular night, so I was to make sure he had a good time.

Anyone would have been depressed in those slovenly surroundings. The radio droned Muzak-style music; my client looked tired and old. He mumbled something about a drink. He was sipping Cointreau, so I did, too. I collected \$250 for the escort service and asked for \$500 for my time. I would have settled for \$400, but he padded into the bedroom and came back with the cash. The next morning, he uncomplainingly gave me another \$100 when he wanted to have sex again. And he told me he'd like to see me regularly.

What the hell, I thought, I might as well be taking his money as anyone else.

Who can say why Arkady Shevchenko fell in love with me? Of course, he was emotionally vulnerable. He had defected from his post as undersecretary general of the United Nations in early April of 1978. On April 20 he was brought to Washington for protection and debriefing. He began seeing prostitutes almost immediately. Six days after my first night with him, Andy learned that his wife, who had returned to Moscow after his defection, had committed suicide, though he was convinced she'd been murdered.

Judy Chavez on the fire escape of her New York co-op, which she helped finance with proceeds from her fling with Soviet defector Arkady Shevchenko and a subsequent book about it. She lives in the loft with her Yugoslavian husband.

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